

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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TAGS: BEXP, ETRN, GB

SUBJ: TRANSGABON RAILROAD: GE BID ON LOCOMOTIVES

COMMERCE FOR CONGER

REF: STATE 204524

1. AS MASSON CURRENTLY IN PARIS, LETTER TO MASSON FROM CHARGE (CONTAINING INFORMATION PARA 2 REFTEL) DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 21 TO HIS ASSISTANT LEMETAYER. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE AND NEWLY ARRIVED ECON OFFICER, LEMETAYER STATED THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE SECOND MEETING OF MRCE BECAUSE TECHNICAL ASPECTS HAD ALREADY BEEN DEALT WITH AND ONLY GE AND FRENCH COMPANY HAD "PASSED" TECHNICAL STAGE. ONLY REMAINING CONSIDERATION WAS FINANCING. GE LOCOMOTIVES WERE CHEAPER BUT FRENCH FINANCING MORE ATTRACTIVE. LEMETAYER SAID HE EXPECTED THAT DECISION WOULD BE MADE SOON BUT WITH CURRENT TRAVEL OF MINISTER RAWIRI AND WITH PRESIDENT BONGO SCHEDULED DEPART THIS WEEK FOR PARIS HE WAS NOT SURE WHEN OR WHERE. IN FACT, HE JOKINGLY ADDED THAT DIFFERENT DECISIONS MIGHT BE TAKEN AT SAME TIME--ONE IN PARIS AND OTHER IN LIBREVILLE. (FYI: RAWIRI CURRENTLY VISITING PARIS,
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ROME, BRUSSELS AND ALGIERS AT HEAD OF GOG DELEGATION TO DISCUSS

FINANCING AND EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSGABON.)

2. CURRENTLY THREE PROPOSALS UNDER CONSIDERATION--GE ALONE, FRENCH ALONE AND COMBINATION OF GE AND FRENCH (LEMETAYER MENTIONED SIX LOCOMOTIVES FROM GE AND SIX FROM FRENCH). IT IS OUR IMPRESSION FROM DISCUSSION WITH LEMETAYER THAT LATTER PROPOSAL HAS BEST CHANCE OF BEING ADOPTED THOUGH ADMITTEDLY LEMETAYER WILL NOT MAKE DECISION.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, LEMETAYER SAID THAT EVEN THOUGH FIRST AND SECOND LEGS OF TRANSGABON HAVE NOW BEEN COMBINED, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER CALL FOR BIDS. RATHER, OCTRA WILL PURCHASE SAME EQUIPMENT FOR SECOND LEG THAT WAS USED ON FIRST LEG IF IT PROVES SATISFACTORY. FOR SPECIFIC CASE OF LOCOMOTIVES, LEMETAYER SAID IT WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE ADDITIONAL ONES WERE NEEDED AND CHOICE WOULD BE BASED ON PERFORMANCE OF FIRST BATCH, LENDING FURTHER CREDENCE TO LIKELIHOOD THAT GE AND FRENCH WILL SHARE FIRST LEG CONTRACT.

COUNTRYMAN

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